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National Training Program: Is Anti-Terrorism Training for First Responders Efficient and
Effective?

Chairmen King and Rogers, and the Members of the Subcommittees, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today to discuss federal counter-terrorism training. My statement presents a brief overview of federal counter-terrorism training aimed at illustrating the range of such training offered by the federal government. The statement also presents areas that may merit oversight to assess whether such training programs are appropriate in scope or possibly redundant.

Overview

Federal counter-terrorism training programs are varied and are provided by numerous federal agencies, among which are the Departments of Defense, Energy, Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, Justice, and Transportation, and the Environmental Protection Agency. Each department or agency provides counter-terrorism training targeted to such specific categories of recipients as federal, state, and local government personnel, emergency responders, and private and public critical infrastructure personnel.

The programs train individuals to prepare for, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks. Some of the training programs, such as those of the Departments of Transportation (DOT) and Energy (DOE), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), are designed for personnel working in critical infrastructure sectors. Other programs, such as those of the Departments of Defense (DOD) and Homeland Security (DHS), are intended for personnel who are not identified with specific critical infrastructure. Instead, DOD and DHS provide training for government personnel, emergency responders, and medical professionals who would respond to a terrorist attack, regardless of location or target. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) provides training specifically to medical personnel, but this training is not targeted to specific critical infrastructure. Instead, HHS provides training that prepares medical personnel to respond to any disaster, but especially to terrorist attacks using biological, chemical, and radiological weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The Department of Justice (DOJ) provides training specifically for federal, state, and local law enforcement personnel. Most of these federal departments and agencies provide training in conjunction with private and public educational institutions, federal laboratories, and federal research and development centers.

The mission of DHS to secure the nation from terrorist attacks gives it primary federal responsibility for providing counter-terrorism training to federal, state, and local emergency responders.¹ Other departments and agencies provide counter-terrorism training, but their programs focus either on specific critical infrastructure sectors, such as energy and transportation, or on specific emergency responders, such as HHS training for medical personnel and DOJ training for law enforcement personnel. DHS provides training to a wide range of critical infrastructure personnel, law enforcement and other emergency responders, government (federal, state, and local) personnel, and medical personnel.

Homeland Security Presidential Directive - 8 (HSPD - 8), issued December 17, 2003, requires the DHS Secretary, in coordination with the HHS Secretary, the Attorney General, and other appropriate federal departments and agencies, and in consultation with state and local governments, to establish and maintain a comprehensive national training program. The national training program is to assist federal, state, and local governments in meeting the *Interim National Preparedness Goal*,² which was released in March 2005.³ The national training program is to identify standards and maximize the effectiveness of existing federal preparedness programs. Additionally, HSPD - 8 directs federal departments and agencies to include private organizations and entities in the accreditation and delivery of preparedness training.⁴

¹ P.L. 107-296, Sec. 101(b).

² U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *The Interim National Preparedness Goal* (Washington: Mar. 2005), available at [<http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?content=4420>], visited June 20, 2005.

³ Office of the President, *Homeland Security Presidential Directive - 8: National Preparedness*, (Washington: Dec. 2003), available at [<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/12/20031217-6.html>], visited June 20, 2005.

⁴ Ibid.

HSPD - 8 also requires the DHS Secretary to develop and maintain a system to collect, analyze, and disseminate lessons learned, best practices, and information from exercises and training events, and establish procedures to improve national preparedness. DHS has developed what it calls the Lessons Learned Information System (LLIS), which provides best practices and information from exercises and training. LLIS, however, does not provide information on how training is coordinated within DHS, or among federal departments and agencies.⁵

Department of Homeland Security

DHS comprises numerous agencies, offices, institutes, and partners⁶ that provide counter-terrorism training for federal, state, and local government personnel. DHS training is provided at such facilities as the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC), National Fire Academy (NFA), Nobel Training Center (NTC), and Emergency Management Institute (EMI). FLETC is an interagency law enforcement center that provides training for federal law enforcement agencies. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administers EMI, NTC, and NFA training activities. NFA trains fire and emergency response personnel to enhance their abilities to respond to fires and related emergencies. EMI is a training program consisting of resident and non-resident courses aimed at enhancing emergency management practices. NTC is the national center for health and medical education in disaster, including acts of terrorism.⁷

Office for Domestic Preparedness. The Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP), which has the primary responsibility within DHS for preparing for potential terrorist attacks against the United States,⁸ is the principal DHS agency providing counter-terrorism and WMD training to states and localities. ODP provides terrorism and WMD training through DHS training institutions and partners. ODP training partners include the Training and Data Exchange Group (TRADE), the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium (NDPC), federal departments, and private and professional organizations.⁹

ODP training is designed to meet the varying needs of its training audiences. It includes reaching multiple emergency responder disciplines through training at the awareness, performance, planning, and management levels. ODP uses a variety of approaches that include traditional classroom methods, train-the-trainer, Web-based training, and video teleconferencing.¹⁰

Trade. TRADE is a federal interagency group that provides training to state and local emergency responders and reviews member courses for consistency, avoidance of training duplication, and the use of up-to-date training methods. TRADE members include the following:

- United States Fire Administration's (USFSA) National Fire Academy (NFA);
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI);
- Department of Justice (DOJ);
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA);
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- Department of Energy (DOE);

⁵ For further information on LLIS, see [<http://www.llis.gov>].

⁶ See the list later in the statement.

⁷ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, "Working with DHS," available at [<http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?theme=82>], visited Oct. 27, 2004.

⁸ P.L. 107-296 (Homeland Security Act of 2002), Sec. 430(d).

⁹ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office for Domestic Preparedness, "Training Overview," available at [<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/training.htm>], visited Oct. 27, 2004.

¹⁰ Ibid.

- Department of Health and Human Services (HHS);
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC);
- Emergency Management Institute (EMI); and
- Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC).¹¹

National Domestic Preparedness Consortium. NDPC is composed of federal training facilities and academic institutions which provide training to emergency responders in different locations in the United States. NDPC members include:

- Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP), at Anniston, Alabama;
- Academy of Counter-Terrorist Education (ACE), at Louisiana State University (LSU);
- National Emergency Response and Rescue Training Center (NERRTC), at the Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX), Texas A&M University (TAMU);
- Energetic Materials Research and Testing Center (EMRTC), at New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NMIMT); and
- National Center for Exercise Excellence (NCEE), at Nevada Test Site (NTS).¹²

Office for Domestic Preparedness Training Partners. In addition to TRADE and NDPC, ODP has cooperative agreements with other federal agencies, private industry, academic institutions, and professional organizations that provide training to federal, state, and local emergency responders. These partners include the following:

- Community Research Associates;
- U.S. Army Dugway Proving Ground;
- International Association of Fire Fighters;
- U.S. Navy's Naval Postgraduate School;
- National Sheriff's Association;
- General Physics Corporation at Pine Bluff Arsenal;
- Science Applications International Corporation;
- George Washington University;
- Michigan State University;
- International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators; and
- International Association of Chiefs of Police.¹³

Department of Defense

The majority of the Department of Defense's (DOD) terrorism-related training courses are dedicated to military personnel. DOD's expertise and range of training facilities related to chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons, however, offer a limited selection of training programs that are available to non-DOD personnel. Most of these programs are intended for medical and technical personnel who could be called upon to respond and treat casualties following an incident involving CBRN weapons. Several of the training courses are provided with the joint sponsorship of the American Red Cross. DOD provides counter-terrorism training to non-DOD personnel at the following:

- U.S. Army Medical Research Institutes for Chemical and Infectious Diseases, Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, and Dugway Proving Ground in Utah;
- Clara Barton Center for Domestic Preparedness,¹⁴ U.S. Army Pine Bluff Arsenal in Arkansas;

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office for Domestic Preparedness, "Training Overview," available at [<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/training.htm>], visited Oct. 27, 2004.

¹⁴ Administered by the American Red Cross and funded through the Department of Defense.

- Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute, in Bethesda, Maryland; and
- Joint Interagency Training Center, in San Diego, California.

Department of Energy

The Department of Energy (DOE) provides technical assistance and training to states for public safety officials of appropriate units of local government and Indian tribes through whose jurisdictions DOE plans to transport spent nuclear fuel or high-level radioactive waste.¹⁵ DOE's Office of Environmental Management trains emergency responders for shipments to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), and also provides training through the Transportation Emergency Preparedness Program (TEPP). Twenty-three states¹⁶ have received approximately \$30 million in training since 1988 to prepare for radioactive waste shipments to the WIPP near Carlsbad, New Mexico. The TEPP has provided technical assistance and training to emergency responders in 34 states¹⁷ in the past two years. In FY2002, DOE provided \$5.8 million for training to the states along its major transportation corridors. DOE estimates that it has trained 16,200 responders since FY1999.¹⁸

Environmental Protection Agency

To carry out its water sector responsibilities, EPA has established a Water Security Division within the Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water. This division works with drinking water and wastewater utilities, states, tribes, and other stakeholders to improve the security of these utilities and improve their ability to respond to security threats and breaches. Among its responsibilities and activities, the Water Security Division provides security and anti-terrorism-related technical assistance and training to the water sector.

EPA's Water Security Division generally does not perform the training itself; it delivers training at locations across the country through stakeholder organizations and other federal partners.¹⁹ EPA has sponsored training on a variety of security topics, including courses to help community water systems prepare vulnerability assessments and emergency response plans, as required by the Bioterrorism Act (P.L. 107-188).²⁰ EPA has entered into an interagency agreement with the Office of Domestic Preparedness (ODP) within DHS, under which ODP has provided emergency response training for medium and large drinking water utilities, first responders, and local elected officials.²¹ To assist smaller drinking water utilities not covered by

¹⁵ Section 180(c) of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, 42 U.S.C. 10101.

¹⁶ AL, AZ, CA, CO, GA, ID, IL, IN, IA, KY, LA, MI, NE, NV, NM, OH, OR, SC, TN, TX, UT, WA, WY.

¹⁷ AL, AR, AZ, CA, CT, DE, GA, ID, IL, IN, IA, KY, LA, MD, MI, MO, NE, NV, NJ, NM, NH, NY, NC, OH, OR, PA, SC, TN, TX, UT, VA, WA, WV, WY.

¹⁸ U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of National Transportation, Corrine Macaluso, "Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management," memorandum, Feb. 5, 2004.

¹⁹ Organizations that provide security training include professional associations, such as the American Water Works Association (AWWA), the Water Environment Federation (WEF), and the National Rural Water Association (NRWA). Congress has provided some grant funds to these organizations, through EPA, to support their water security training activities.

²⁰ Title IV of the Bioterrorism Act (42 U.S.C. 300i) amended the Safe Drinking Water Act to require each community water system serving more than 3,300 individuals to conduct an assessment of the system's vulnerability to terrorist attacks or other intentional acts to disrupt the provision of a safe and reliable drinking water supply. These drinking water systems must submit a copy of the assessment to EPA. The act also requires these systems to prepare emergency response plans incorporating the results of the vulnerability assessments no later than six months after completing the assessments. All utilities covered by the act were to have completed vulnerability assessments by June 30, 2004. The last statutory deadline for systems to complete emergency response plans was December 31, 2004.

²¹ Because most water and wastewater utilities are municipally owned, EPA has made an effort to involve locally elected officials in first responder training courses.

the Bioterrorism Act, EPA has provided funding to the National Rural Water Association to deliver security training.

Department of Health and Human Services

Counter-terrorism training programs supported by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) are aimed at a variety of public health and health care providers, individuals who provide ancillary health services such as laboratory testing, and researchers who study health effects from, or countermeasures to, biological, chemical and radiological agents. Training programs have a variety of intended purposes, including assuring the ability to recognize and treat victims of terrorist events, protecting workers and others from infection or contamination while care is rendered, protecting critical health care assets and maintaining electronic and other lines of communication during catastrophic events, assuring competent laboratory services, and assuring that certain assets such as radioactive materials or biological organisms are secured against potential misuse.

All of the HHS agencies listed below have responsibility for funding and administering specific training programs and assets.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC is the agency primarily responsible for the public health response to terrorism and other public health emergencies. Most extramural training programs at CDC have been coordinated across centers and offices by the CDC Public Health Practice Program Office (PHPPO). CDC also supports intramural training of public health professionals through its Epidemiology Program Office (EPO). According to a reorganization called the CDC Futures Initiative, existing PHPPO and EPO training activities are redistributed to several new organizational units within CDC.²² CDC-funded training programs are developed and delivered in a variety of ways. CDC is entirely responsible for some programs. Others are developed and delivered in conjunction with state and local health departments and academic centers, although some are developed by these entities with CDC funding but little direct input otherwise.

Health Resources Services Administration. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), through its Bureau of Health Professions, provides support for training and placement of health care and public health workers in order to alleviate shortages and maldistributions of these workers.

HRSA also administers the National Bioterrorism Hospital Preparedness Program, a program of grants to states to prepare hospitals and supporting health care systems to deliver coordinated and effective care to victims of terrorism and other public health emergencies. As part of their application for funding, states must include a written proposal for providing relevant training for hospital and health care personnel to assure readiness in their states.²³

Following the terrorist attacks of 2001, HRSA has provided annual grants to academic institutions through a new Bioterrorism Training and Curriculum Development Program for training in recognition and treatment of diseases related to bioterrorism for health care providers in training and on the job.

Food and Drug Administration. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) assures the safety and efficacy of human drugs and vaccines, medical devices, and animal drugs, and the safety of certain foods and cosmetics.

²² See U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Futures Initiative Home Page, at [<http://www.cdc.gov/futures/default.htm>].

²³ For more information on education and training components of the HRSA National Bioterrorism Hospital Preparedness Program, see presentation of Teri Spear before the meeting of the HHS Secretary's Council on Public Health Preparedness, May 3-4, 2004, available at [<http://www.hhs.gov/asphep/presentation/040503presentationlist.html>].

FDA provides training for its own employees and for state, local, and tribal regulatory personnel at no cost through its Office of Regulatory Affairs “ORA University.”²⁴ Relevant training courses for terrorism preparedness include those geared toward implementation of new regulations for food and drug safety in the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002, P.L. 107-188. Formats include Web-based and classroom instruction, video tele-conferences, and a library of training materials.

Department of Justice

The Department of Justice (DOJ) enforces the law to help ensure public safety against foreign and domestic terrorist threats, by conducting federal investigations and prosecutions of persons suspected of unlawful activities. DOJ also sponsors and provides assistance to state and local law enforcement agencies. Listed below are several of these training programs.²⁵ While some of them are not directly related to counter-terrorism, they are listed because they may convey the knowledge and skills to law enforcement personnel that could advance investigations of terrorist activities and responses to terrorist incidents. Among the programs are those related to special weapons and tactics, criminal intelligence, money laundering, computer crime, and crisis response and management. Some programs are provided directly by DOJ entities — the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; and the National White Collar Crime Center. Others are sponsored by DOJ, through the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and provided by nonprofit law enforcement organizations.²⁶ DOJ training includes:

- State and Local Anti-Terrorism Training;
- WMD Hazardous Material Evidence Collection;
- Crisis Management;
- Crisis Negotiation;
- Law Enforcement Response to Terrorism;
- Multi-Agency Incident Management for Law Enforcement and Fire Service;
- Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Terrorists;
- Terrorism and Explosive Seminars;
- Criminal Intelligence Systems;
- Foundations of Intelligence Analysis;
- White Collar Crime and Terrorism;
- Cyber and Computer Crime; and
- Basic LAN and Advanced Internet Investigations.

Department of Transportation

Rail and bus transit systems are identified as critical infrastructure because they provide transportation for many Americans in densely populated urban areas and serve key economic, financial, and governmental centers of the nation. They move over 14 million passengers daily, and in one month they transport more passengers than U.S. airlines move in a year. Since these systems are operated in an open environment, they are high-risk, high-consequence targets for terrorists.²⁷ Rail transit subways travel under key government buildings, business centers, and harbors. Rail and bus transit systems travel along fixed routes with frequent scheduled stops, and aviation-type passenger screening procedures may not be practical because of the large volume of daily passengers.

²⁴ See FDA, ORAU Home Page at [http://www.fda.gov/ora/training/course_ora.html].

²⁵ Short descriptions of these programs and courses are available on a Web-accessible “law enforcement training database” and search engine maintained by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. See [<http://bjatraining.aspensys.com>].

²⁶ The nonprofit law enforcement organizations include the Institute for Intergovernmental Research, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Oklahoma Regional Community Policing Institute, and SEARCH (a multi-state consortium dedicated to improving criminal justice record systems).

²⁷ U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, “Safety and Security: FTA Transit Security,” available at [<http://transit-safety.volpe.dot.gov/Security/Default.asp>], visited Nov. 18, 2004.

Federal Transit Administration. Within the Department of Transportation, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is responsible for providing counter-terrorism and homeland security training to transit system personnel. FTA provides security guidance to transit system operators, and it has instituted a five-point security initiative to assist transit systems in preparing for and responding to terrorist attacks. In addition to training, FTA provides assistance to transit system agencies with on-site readiness assessments, technical assistance, and regional forums for emergency responders, and grants for terrorism drills.²⁸

FTA is also working with the transit industry to identify critical, high-risk assets and operations and to develop security strategies for these critical assets. The strategies will address training, providing technical assistance, sharing best practices, and testing new security technology.²⁹ FTA's counter-terrorism training courses are available to transit system administrators, operators, managers, and emergency responders.

Possible Questions for Congressional Oversight

The primary stakeholders in responding to terrorist attacks, and thus the recipients of counter-terrorism training, are federal, state, and local governments; private and public medical systems; and critical infrastructure administrators. In the evolution of counter-terrorism training, a number of questions have arisen with regard to possible duplication of training programs. The questions and possible approaches might be of interest as you continue your oversight of federal counter-terrorism training. CRS takes no position with respect to any of the possible approaches listed.

Potential Duplication of Department of Homeland Security Training. Within DHS, ODP and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administer training programs at the state and local levels, and at national training institutes. At the national level, FEMA administers the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) and the National Fire Academy (NFA). ODP does not directly administer any training institute; but it provides guidance and funding to training institutes that are part of the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium (NDPC), described earlier in this statement.

Some training programs offered by EMI and NFA have subject matter similar to training provided by NDPC training institutes, such as incident management, homeland security planning, hazardous material incident response, emergency operations, and WMD response. Because of the possible similarity of these training programs for state and local first responders, some might argue for a need to consolidate or coordinate training offered by these two separate DHS agencies.

FEMA's firefighting training provided by the NFA, however, focuses primarily on the needs of local fire departments, whereas NDPC provides some training primarily focusing on law enforcement. Some of the training that is tailored to a specific profession such as law enforcement or firefighting would not seem to be redundant. Basic or introductory training such as incident management or WMD response, however, may not be specifically tailored for a single profession or type of first responder. The possible redundancy of training and the potential consolidation of training may be policy questions that the committee may choose to address through oversight of DHS's role in providing assistance to states and localities. Possible approaches include:

Government Accountability Office (GAO) Evaluation of Training. The House Committee on Homeland Security could ask GAO to undertake an evaluation of DHS counter-terrorism training programs. The evaluation could review ODP and FEMA training curricula, individual courses, intended and actual trainees, and training facilities. After conducting a review of these courses, GAO might be able to identify any duplication of training and possible

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

options for consolidating or coordinating this training. This option would give the committee additional tools for oversight of the programs. H.R. 1544 (as reported), Section 6, proposes this evaluation. This option, however, would require the committee to work with GAO to set a mutually acceptable scope and time for the study.

Coordination of Department of Homeland Security Training. If the committee were to find undesirable redundancy in training programs, it could direct DHS to be more attentive to coordinating the counter-terrorism training programs administered by ODP and FEMA. DHS could possibly establish a board to review the ODP and FEMA training programs, and to recommend coordination or other steps to reduce duplication.

Consolidation of Department of Homeland Security Training. If the committee were to find a need to consolidate DHS training programs, it could direct DHS, through statutory or conference language, to conduct a review of its training programs and develop a plan to consolidate its training. This consolidation might involve the removal of similar programs provided by ODP and FEMA to ensure there is no redundancy. If Congress did not consider this consolidation adequate to ensure against redundant or uncoordinated DHS training, it could also direct DHS to consolidate all counter-terrorism training under one agency. ODP might be directed to assume the responsibility for administering not only its training, but also the training FEMA provides first responders through EMI and NFA. Some would argue this is a logical choice since ODP is responsible for administering the funding to states and localities that assist them in receiving this training. This option, however, might be seen as impractical due to the training EMI provides state and local emergency managers that is specific to natural disasters, and the specific training NFA provides firefighters. FEMA historically has administered training programs for emergency managers and firefighters, whereas ODP has administered law enforcement focused training.

Potential Duplication of Federal Counter-Terrorism Training. Because of the rapid evolution of counter-terrorism training programs offered by different federal departments and agencies, there may be a duplication of certain types of training provided to federal, state, and local government personnel, emergency responders, and critical infrastructure facility personnel. For example, DHS, HHS, and EPA all offer training related to responding to hazardous materials incidents.

It is possible that training provided by DHS, DOD, DOJ, DOT, EPA, and HHS to first responders is not coordinated, and that a federal effort should be made to ensure these federal entities provide coordinated, non-duplicative training. The following possible oversight approaches might assist the committee as it continues its oversight effort concerning federal counter-terrorism training.

Government Accountability Office Evaluation of Training. Congress could ask GAO to undertake an evaluation of all federal counter-terrorism training programs, similar to its request for a GAO evaluation of DHS training (H.R. 1544, Section 6). GAO could be asked to review individual courses, training curricula, training audiences, and training facilities. After conducting a review of these courses, GAO might be able to identify any duplication of training and possible alternatives for consolidating or coordinating this training. This option would require Congress to work with GAO to set a mutually acceptable scope and time for the evaluation.

Interagency Task Force. Congress might direct, through statutory and conference language, the federal departments and agencies that provide counter-terrorism training to establish an interagency task force to review their counter-terrorism programs. Because of the lead role DHS provides in counter-terrorism training, Congress could consider directing DHS to chair the task force. Once the training has been reviewed, the task force could be directed to coordinate and consolidate the training as necessary. This option, however, could result in “turf”

disputes and federal departments and agencies attempting to protect training programs and the funding associated with them.